



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ALIEN SMUGGLERS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR RISKING LIFE OF CHILD SMUGGLED IN THE TRUNK OF A CAR

TUCSON, ARIZONA –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on April 21, 2003 and April 22, 2003 Leigh Christina Miguel D.O.B. 2/13/77 of Sells, Arizona was sentenced to 21 months in prison and Norman Jeremiah Johnson D.O.B. 9/24/61 of Little Tucson, Arizona was sentenced to 37 months in prison, by United States District Judge Frank R. Zapata, in Tucson, Arizona.

This case began on July 28, 2002, when the Pima County Sheriff's Department stopped Ms. Miguel's vehicle for expired registration. When the deputies approached the driver, they saw two adults lying across the back of the rear passenger seat as if trying to conceal themselves from the deputies' observation. As a deputy looked closer, he could see the head of a child lying in the trunk. Deputies had the defendant open the trunk and found three children, ages 4, 5 and 7 lying in the trunk. The deputies then called the United States Border Patrol to respond to the scene. The seven year old boy was unconscious and unresponsive to the deputies' attempts to wake him. An ambulance was called out and paramedics had to

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administer oxygen to revive the young boy. The young boy had been exhausted and dehydrated after walking two days through the desert and then placed in the trunk of the defendants' vehicle.

In sentencing the defendants, the district court made specific findings that the seven year old boy had suffered injury and was a vulnerable victim.

On February 5, 2003, Ms. Miguel and Mr. Johnson pled guilty to an Indictment which had charged them with Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens, Three Counts of Transportation of Illegal Aliens for Private Financial Gain and Placing in Jeopardy Life of Alien (for the three children found in the trunk) and Two Counts of Transportation of Illegal Aliens for Private Financial Gain. There were no agreements regarding sentencing.

Paul Charlton, the United States Attorney for the District of Arizona, states," This case serves as yet another example of how alien smugglers care nothing about the lives of the people they bring into the United States and will even risk the lives of children for a profit. We hope this message is delivered not only to smugglers but to people who would put their lives in the hands of smugglers-Stay home- Stay safe."

The United States Border Patrol was the investigating agency. The prosecution of this case was handled by Serra Tsethlikai, .Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

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